

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS HALIFAX 000065

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EWWT](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [KCRM](#) [ETRD](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: PORT SECURITY: PROPOSED CHANGES IN HALIFAX GENERATE CONTROVERSY

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

1. (SBU) Press reports that the Port of Halifax is planning significant reductions in the number of police assigned to security have generated significant local controversy, with politicians including the Mayor and a federal Senator denouncing the proposal. While it is correct that the port is re-negotiating its contract with Halifax Regional Police (HRP) and is seeking changes in the policing services HRP provides, it appears that the press got a part of the story but not all of it. We remain convinced that management at the port definitely "gets it" when it comes to security and is seeking to spend its security money more efficiently, not cut it back.

2. (SBU) CG had a long discussion with Port of Halifax VP for Security George Malec the day the story about security cutbacks broke in the local press. Malec was emphatic that, far from reducing security, the port had spent millions over the last three years and was not planning to cut the amount spent annually for police protection. He made the following points:

-- Halifax is the only port in Canada that has armed police with arrest powers on the premises at all times. Other ports use contract security services.

-- The port is renegotiating its contract with the HRP. The previous contract negotiated three years ago had nine officers working on shifts to provide 24 hour coverage.

-- The port pays around C\$1 million/year for this coverage, and is growing unsatisfied with the people who were being assigned to it by the HRP. "Not always the most aggressive police officers in town," is how Malec diplomatically put it. The port is determined in the new contract to move away from the "cops-riding-in-cars- eating-donuts-at-all-hours" model to one that is more focused on possible security vulnerabilities.

-- In the last three years the port has spent about C\$5 million on improved physical security including fencing, sensors and cameras, all of which are now monitored centrally. As a result there is reduced need for police vehicle patrols. In addition the port bought a high-tech, fast patrol boat that they have given to the police department and want to see used for more aggressive patrolling on the water.

-- The port will continue to have armed police dockside when cruise ships call.

-- An eight member Royal Canadian Mounted Police intelligence/undercover team is now housed at the port. Relations with the Halifax Police port detachment and the RCMP have apparently not been particularly good. Improving the working relationship is one goal of the new contract with HRP.

-- The port will continue to spend around C\$1million/year on its policing contract, but will be spending the money differently (and it hopes more effectively). For example, the port intends to get the police out of their cars and have them posted at the truck gates checking driver ID and documents for every container leaving. This will make Halifax the only port in the country with police officers with arrest powers at the gates whenever they are open.

3. (SBU) Malec was also critical of the allocation of federal government money for port security. Of the more than C\$20 million announced about a year ago for improved security, Halifax has received to date C\$220,000, despite spending millions on improvements directly related to security.

4. (SBU) COMMENT: We and other USG officials who have met with senior port management have been very impressed with the "no-nonsense" attitude toward security that pervades the organization's culture. Port management clearly understands the multiple negative implications of a significant security breach and has sought every opportunity to cooperate with USG efforts to improve security for containers that pass through the port, as well as for the primarily American cruise ship passengers who arrive every summer. We are confident that the port's efforts are well-conceived and well-focused. END COMMENT.

HILL